

Essential Literary Devices

Literary Device and Definition	Example from Literary Piece
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Types of Literature

Novel <i>A book, carrying narrative qualities commonly associated with storytelling</i>	
Novella <i>A short novel or a long short story; more compressed and focused than a novel, but more overarching and ambitious than a short story</i>	
Short Story <i>A focused story often focused on a small selection of characters and a single or few theme or themes</i>	
Poem A broad word used to describe a piece of writing that stresses the individual meanings of words, symbolism, imagery, and often rhyme	
Bildungsroman <i>A 'coming-of-age' tale; a narrative that stresses the development of the central character, often focusing on a transition into manhood/womanhood and/or the protagonist's character development</i>	

Meaning

Thematic Statement <i>A statement/sentence explaining the author's perspective or intended meaning, as connected to the central idea</i>	
Theme/Central Idea <i>An abstract concept represented through the character behaviors, actions, settings, etc.; not a complete sentence; Acts as a foundation for the entire literary piece</i>	
Motif <i>A recurring element or object that plays a significant role; often symbolic and contributes to the theme or central idea</i>	

Types of Context (Common)

Historical Context <i>(Most Broad)</i> <i>Elements of history that could have affected the values of the novel, author, political influencers, laws, and more</i>	
Authorial Context (Biographical) <i>The values, events, and relationships that influence the author's world view, thus influencing the work</i>	
Narrative Context <i>(Most Narrow)</i> <i>The characters, setting, and events of the narrative or story; a summary of the text or part of the text</i>	

Types of Context (Expanded)

Literary Context <i>The work's significance, relevance, and acknowledgements to other pieces considered literature or part of the literary canon</i>	
Political Context <i>Significant political and legal movements that could have influence on either the events of the narrative or the world view of the author</i>	
Philosophical Context <i>Perspectives on reality, knowledge, or existence that influence the values and actions of the characters in the narrative or the author</i>	
Religious Context <i>Beliefs associated with worship that influence character or author behaviors, values, etc.</i>	
Sociological Context (Cultural) <i>Elements relating to the structure of human society that influence character or author behavior, values, etc.; a strong focus on cultural and societal beliefs</i>	
Psychological Context <i>The mental and emotional factors that influence the author's or character's behavior, values, etc.; often associated with defects, or the absence of, relative to the environment</i>	

Geographical Context <i>Physical characteristics of the setting that influence character or author behavior, values, etc.</i>	
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Forms of Irony

Dramatic Irony <i>The audience is aware of intentions or events while a character or the characters (in the play, novel, etc.) are not</i>	
Situational Irony <i>The opposite of expected events occurs</i>	
Verbal Irony <i>The opposite of what is said, is meant; sarcasm, and more</i>	

Forms of Comparison

Juxtaposition <i>To place to objects, characters, settings, etc. together to accentuate or reveal a characteristic</i>	
Character Foil <i>A character that contrasts another character in order to reveal the characteristics so they may be better judged</i>	
Antithesis <i>A sentence, idea, or character that represent the diametric opposite</i>	
Parody <i>A form of exaggerated imitation that creates a comedic or ironic effect</i>	
Satire <i>A form of comedic exaggeration that is used to draw contempt from the reader by exaggerating or parodying the focus of the satire</i>	
Allusion <i>An indirect reference to something originating outside the text</i>	
Anthropomorphism <i>A nonhuman thing, like a place or animal, behaves as if it is human</i>	

Symbolism and Representation

Symbol <i>Using an object to stand in for an idea</i>	
Represent/Representation <i>Using an object or person to stand in for a larger idea or group that the person or object categorically belongs to (more broad than symbolism)</i>	
Metaphor <i>A comparison in non-literal terms; usually stronger and more direct than a simile</i>	
Simile <i>A comparison in non-literal terms using like or as; usually more distant and more colloquial than a metaphor</i>	
Personification <i>Human-like qualities and characteristics applied to a nonhuman thing</i>	
Metonymy <i>A part is <u>associated</u> with the whole; Does not necessarily need to represent the whole</i>	
Synecdoche <i>The part <u>represents</u> the whole; must represent the entirety of the whole of the part</i>	

Deciphering Emotion

Tone or Mood <i>The emotional weight or meaning a passage (2+ words) carries; an emotional definition or association or a passage (2+ words)</i>	
Diction <i>A more formal way of saying 'word choice'</i>	
Colloquialism <i>Informal language or slang</i>	
Denotation <i>The formal and literal definition of a word</i>	
Connotation <i>The emotional weight or meaning a single word carries; an emotional definition or association of a single word</i>	

Anecdote <i>Short, often comical, amusing, or colloquial retelling of an event or incident</i>	
Epithet <i>A descriptive word or phrase used in place of the original person, setting, object, etc.; reduces identity to the term; can be positive or negative</i>	
Hyperbole <i>A deliberate exaggeration for comedic effect or emphasis</i>	
Understatement <i>Using irony, humor, and/or word choice to minimize the effect, importance, or etc. of a person, setting, or object.</i>	

Syntactical and Structural Choices

Structure <i>Relating to the arrangement of words, phrases, paragraphs, chapters, introductions, essential plot points, the climax, settings, and more</i>	
Syntax <i>Relating to the arrangement of words and phrases within a sentence; sentence structure</i>	
Repetition <i>Often used to add emphasis, exaggerate, minimize, or create irony</i>	
Portmanteau <i>The practice of combining words to create a new word that encompasses and molds the meaning of the words combined</i>	
Foreshadowing <i>Indirectly hinting at future events, shifts, etc.</i>	